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OMAHA BEACH 4-1 MORNING-LINE FAVORITE IN FIELD OF 20 FOR 145TH KENTUCKY DERBY

LOUISVILLE, KY (Tuesday, April 30, 2019) – Fox Hill Farm's **Omaha Beach** has been installed as the 4-1 morning-line favorite for Saturday's 145th running of the \$3 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) that drew a field of 20 entries and one also-eligible Tuesday morning.

With 20 starters, the winner will earn a \$1,860,000 check from the race that is scheduled as the 12th Saturday with a 6:50 p.m. (all times Eastern) post time. First post time for Saturday's 14-race program is 10:30 a.m.

Trained by **Richard Mandella**, Omaha Beach brings a three-race win streak into Derby 145 including victories in a division of the Rebel (GII) and the Arkansas Derby (GI).

Mike Smith, who has been aboard for those two victories, will have the mount Saturday as he aims for his third triumph in the Run for the Roses. Smith previously won in 2005 on **Giacomo** and last year on Triple Crown winner **Justify**.

Six jockeys have won the Kentucky Derby in consecutive years with the most recent being **Victor Espinoza** in 2014-15 on **California Chrome** and **American Pharoah**.

Omaha Beach will break from post position 12.

Omaha Beach is one of five Grade I winners in the field with five-time Kentucky Derby-winning trainer **Bob Baffert** having three of them.

Topping the Baffert trio is three-time Grade I winner and champion 2-year-old of 2018 **Game Winner** who is the 5-1 second choice on the morning line.

Owned by **Gary** and **Mary West**, Game Winner capped a perfect 2018 campaign with a 2 1/4-length victory in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI) at Churchill Downs. He also won the Del Mar Futurity (GI) and American Pharoah (GI) last year.

In 2019, Game Winner was beaten a nose by Omaha Beach in the Rebel and second to stablemate **Roadster** in the Santa Anita Derby (GI). **Joel Rosario**, who won the 2013 Kentucky Derby on **Orb**, has the mount on Game Winner who will break from post position 16.

Speedway Stable's Roadster has won three of four career starts with his only setback coming to Game Winner in the Del Mar Futurity. **Florent Geroux** will be aboard Saturday and break from post position 17.

Baffert's third entrant is **WinStar Farm**, **China Horse Club International** and **Starlight Racing's** **Improbable**, who, like Roadster, is 6-1 on the morning line and co-third choices.

Winner of all three 2018 starts that included a victory in the Los Alamitos Futurity (GI) as well as the Street Sense here during Breeders' Cup Weekend, Improbable was runner-up to Omaha Beach in the Arkansas Derby. **Irad Ortiz Jr.** has the mount and will break from post position five.

With a victory Saturday, Baffert would tie **Ben Jones** for the most Kentucky Derby triumphs with six and become the first trainer to win the race in consecutive years twice. His first two Derby victories came with **Silver Charm** in 1997 and **Real Quiet** in 1998.

A win by Improbable would give his ownership consecutive Derby victories, a feat that has been accomplished four times and most recently by **Meadow Stable** in 1972-73 with **Riva Ridge** and **Secretariat**.

Gary and Mary West also own the race's other Grade I winner in the undefeated **Maximum Security**.

Trained by **Jason Servis**, Maximum Security ran his undefeated streak to four with a front-running victory in the Florida Derby (GI). **Luis Saez**, who was aboard for that score, has the mount Saturday and will break from post position seven.

In addition to Baffert, two other trainers will be attempting to add to their Kentucky Derby victory totals.

Shug McGaughey, who trained 2013 Derby winner **Orb**, will send out **William S. Farish's Code of Honor**, who was third in the Florida Derby in his most recent start.

John Velazquez, a two-time Derby winner, will ride Code of Honor and break from post position 13. Velazquez won with **Animal Kingdom** in 2011 and **Always Dreaming** in 2017.

Always Dreaming was trained by **Todd Pletcher**, who will seek his third Derby victory when he sends out the duo of **Cutting Humor** and **Spinoff**. Pletcher also won in 2010 with **Super Saver**.

Cutting Humor, owned by **Starlight Racing**, comes into Saturday's race off a victory in the Sunland Park Derby (GIII). **Corey Lanerie** has the mount and will break from post position 10.

Wertheimer et Frere's Spinoff, runner-up in the Louisiana Derby (GII), will be ridden by **Manny Franco** and break from post position 19.

Lending an international presence to this year's race is Japanese invitee **Master Fencer (JPN)**.

Owned by **Katsumi** and **Yasuyo Yoshizawa** and trained by **Koichi Tsunoda**, Master Fencer has won two of four starts on the dirt and comes to Churchill Downs after spending his first few days in North America training at Keeneland.

Julien Leparoux has the mount and will break from post position 15.

The field for the Kentucky Derby, with riders and morning-line odds from the rail out, is: **War of Will** (Tyler Gaffalione, 20-1), **Tax** (Junior Alvarado, 20-1), **By My Standards** (Gabriel Saez, 20-1), **Gray Magician** (Drayden Van Dyke, 50-1), Improbable (Irad Ortiz Jr., 6-1), **Vekoma** (Javier Castellano, 20-1), Maximum Security (Luis Saez, 10-1), **Tacitus** (Jose Ortiz, 10-1), **Plus Que Parfait** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 30-1), Cutting Humor (Corey Lanerie, 30-1), **Haikal** (Rajiv Maragh, 30-1), Omaha Beach (Mike Smith, 4-1), Code of Honor (John Velazquez, 15-1), **Win Win Win** (Julian Pimentel, 15-1), Master Fencer (Jpn) (Julien Leparoux, 50-1), Game Winner (Joel Rosario, 5-1), Roadster (Florent Geroux, 6-1), **Long Range Toddy** (Jon Court, 30-1), Spinoff (Manny Franco, 30-1), **Country House** (Flavien Prat, 30-1). Also-eligible: **Bodexpress** (Chris Landeros, 30-1). All starters will carry 126 pounds.

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